

United States Senate

May 14, 2021

Mr. Mark Zuckerberg
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Facebook, Inc.
1601 Willow Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Mr. Jack Dorsey
Chief Executive Officer
Twitter, Inc.
1355 Market Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94103

Mr. Evan Spiegel
Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer
Snap, Inc.
2772 Donald Douglas Loop North
Santa Monica, CA 90405

Mr. Sundar Pichai
Chief Executive Officer
Alphabet Inc.
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway
Mountain View, CA 9404

Dear Chief Executive Officer:

In March, I wrote to you expressing my growing concern over the impact of social media on America's children and young adults. As I noted in my March 22 letter¹, for a growing number of Americans, social media has become an integral part of daily life. In recent years, we've seen this dependence on social media platforms grow. While social media has offered a way for families forced to stay apart during the COVID-19 pandemic the ability to interact in new ways, I remain concerned about the massively increased usage of social media, especially by our younger generation. Reports show that children are particularly vulnerable to feelings of loneliness, depression and other mental health issues², and it is our responsibility to protect their wellbeing.

I am especially troubled by reports that Facebook is working on a version of its Instagram app for kids under 13. Even more worrisome is that Facebook did not deny these reports in its response to my March 22 letter. Unfortunately, none of the responses

¹ <https://www.rickscott.senate.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/210322%20Teenage%20Social%20Media%20Use%20-%20Copy2%20%281%29.pdf>

² *Increases in Depressive Symptoms, Suicide-Related Outcomes, and Suicide Rates Among U.S. Adolescents After 2010 and Links to Increased New Media Screen*,
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2167702617723376>

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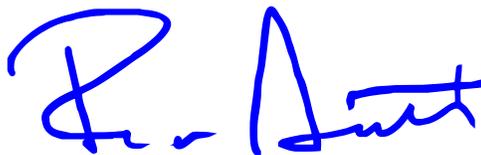
I received from Facebook, Twitter, or Snapchat alleviated my concerns, and I've yet to receive a response from Google at all.

I cannot stress enough that the American people deserve to understand the risks associated with the repeated and long-term use of social media platforms, especially among children. That is why, this week, I filed the *Safe Social Media Act*³ to protect our children and better understand the true risks and impact of social media use by those under the age of 18. The *Safe Social Media Act* requires the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to conduct a study on the effects of social media use among children under the age of 18. In particular, the FTC and CDC would investigate the long-term health and mental health impacts of prolonged social media usage and report its findings to Congress along with policy recommendations.

Research from the Pew Research Center⁴ shows that nearly all U.S. teens ages 13-17 have access to a smartphone and almost half of teens are online "almost constantly." It is time to do the necessary research to fully understand the impact social media is having on America's children.

I welcome your support of this legislation and full cooperation in any studies into the mental health of our children and young adults, and look forward to working together to protect American families.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott
United States Senator

³ <https://www.rickscott.senate.gov/sen-rick-scott-introduces-safe-social-media-act-study-social-media-use-among-teens>

⁴ <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/>